During the year, only 56 miles of compartment lines as against 152 in the previous year were cut and cleared, at an average cost of Rs. 9-12-3 per mile, which cost rate is in excess of that of the last year by about Rs. 2 in consequence of the difficulty of procuring labour at reasonable rates, due to the outbreak of the plague.

Progress made in cutting up forests into compartments.

46. The year's work and that remaining to be done is exhibited in the following statement:—

Division.	Area cut up into compartments up to 1st July 1896.		Area cut up during 1896-97.		Total area cut up into compartments.		Area still remaining to be cut up.
	Acres.	Length in miles of rides 20 feet wide.	Acres.	Length in miles of rides 20 feet wide.	Acres.	Length in miles of rides 20 feet wide.	Acres.
Sukkur ...	*203,307	1,310	5,870	17	209,177	1,327	78,541
Naushahro ...	*83,764	523	1,668	4	85,432	527	71,368
Hyderabad ...	103 055	530	5,022	29	108,077	559	10,900
Jerruck ...	96,196	561	1,200	6	97,396	567	20,070
Total ...	486,322	2,924	13,760	56	500,082	2,980	180,879

* Disforested area has been excluded.

(b) Annual Plans of Operations.

Annual Plans of Operations.

47. The provision of the plans it was somewhat difficult, in a year like that of 1896-97 in which pestilence raged throughout the province, to adhere to. When quarantine and other restrictions were first imposed, there was a wide spread scare among-t the coupe contractors and their work people, which was with considerable difficulty somewhat appeased. Operations in some forests actually came to a stand still, and additional time to exploit the remaining material in such coupes as were left wholly or partially unworked at the expiry of the contract period had to be granted.

II.—Working of the year.

(a) Communications and Buildings.

(1) Roads.

Roads.

48. As explained in paragraph 39 of the Administration Report for the year 1894-95, hardly any necessity exists for undertaking the construction of any expensive forest roads.

(2) Buildings.

Buildings.

49. The expenditure on buildings as compared with that of the previous year was as follows:—

Year.	New work.	Repairs.	Total.
	Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
1895-96 ...	212	335	547
1896-97 ...	122	335	457

50. A good deal of work remains to be done in all divisions under this head in building quarters for the subordinate staff. In this respect, the Jerruck Division is the worst, in which during the year three new *landhis* were erected at a cost of Rs. 122.

51. No works were carried out through the agency of the Public Works Department.

(b) Protection of Forests from Injury.

(1) General Protection and Breaches of Forest Law.

(a) General Protection.

52. The protective establishment has remained unchanged during the year.

Fresh instructions have been issued by Government on the proposals relating to the reorganisation of the subordinate Forest establishments submitted in response to their Resolution No. 5811, dated 29th July 1896, and all the Conservators in the Bombay Presidency have been directed to consult together and resubmit them on a uniform plan.

(b) Breaches of Forest Law.

Cases tried by Magistrates.

53. The following statement shows the number of cases tried by Magistrates for breaches of Forest law during the years 1895-96 and 1896-97, with the result of the trials :—

Division.	Cases of 1895-96.						Cases of 1896-97.						Pending in Court on 1st July 1897.	Percentage of failure.	
	Pending in Court on 1st July 1895.	Taken into Court during the year.	Total.	Disposed of by Magistrates during the year.			Pending in Court on 1st July 1896.	Taken into Court during the year.	Total.	Disposed of by Magistrates during the year.				1895-96.	1896-97.
				Convicted.	Acquitted.	Total.				Convicted.	Acquitted.	Total.			
Sukkur ...	...	29	29	12	8	20	9	31	40	19	9	28	12	40	32
Naushahro ...	3	28	31	12	11	23	8	14	22	11	4	15	7	48	27
Hyderabad ...	4	25	29	17	8	25	4	11	15	2	3	5	10	32	60
Jerruck ...	...	3	3	1	1	2	1	4	5	2	2	4	1	50	50
Total ...	7	85	92	42	28	70	22	60	82	34	18	52	30	40	35

54. The year opened with 22 cases awaiting trial and 60 were taken into Court during the year. Of the total number, 52 were disposed of by the 30th June 1897, with the result that there were 34 convictions and 18 acquittals. The percentage of failures for the Circle has fallen from 40 to 35, which appears still somewhat high, but it is not actually so. When the number of prosecutions is small, as in the Sukkur and Jerruck Divisions, the slightest variation in the number of cases convicted or acquitted affects the proportion so considerably as to tend to an abnormal rise or fall in the percentage of failures, and such being the case in the year 1896-97 the results are not discouraging as they appear at first sight, but show a geneal improvement over those of 1895-96.

Comparative statement of prosecutions.

55. In the statement following, the number and nature of new cases taken into Court during the two years 1895-96 and 1896-97 are compared :—

Division.	New cases of the year.								Total.	
	Injury to forest by fire.		Unauthorised felling or appropriation of wood and other minor forest produce.		Grazing without permission or in tracts in which grazing is prohibited.		Other offences.			
	1895-96.	1896-97.	1895-96.	1896-97.	1895-96.	1896-97.	1895-96.	1896-97.	1895-96.	1896-97.
Sukkur ...	...	3	19	6	8	7	2	15	29	31
Naushahro ...	2	1	11	3	...	...	15	10	28	14
Hyderabad ...	...	...	17	8	4	1	4	2	25	11
Jerruck ...	...	1	1	1	2	...	...	2	3	4
Total ...	2	5	48	18	14	8	21	29	85	60